

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

22-2A

ORLEANS

EAS.589

**Town/City:** Eastham

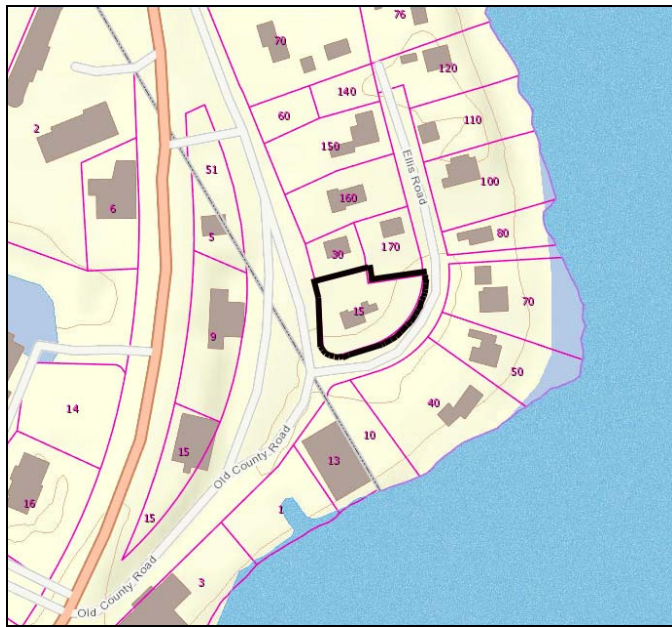
**Place:** South Eastham

## Photograph



View from southeast.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Larson Fisher Associates with Kathryn Grover

**Organization:** Eastham Historical Commission

**Date:** April 2013

**Address:** 15 Ellis Road

**Historic Name:** Lewis W. & Beryl Eldredge Rental House

**Uses:** Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

**Date of Construction:** c. 1950

**Source:** deeds

**Style/Form:** Ranch

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

### Exterior Material:

Foundation: Undetermined (covered w/siding)

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/wood trim

Roof: asphalt shingles

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** shed

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): 1-story solarium added to right (east side) 2002; all windows replaced c. 2010

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** .35 acre

**Setting:** This house is sited at the northeast corner of the intersection of Old County Road and Ellis Road within a residential subdivision. Commercial properties lie across Old State Highway and Old County Road to the west and south.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

15 ELLIS ROAD

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The property contains a simple one-story, wood frame, Ranch-style dwelling clad with wood shingles in the Cape Cod mode. It has a gable roof, with cross-gabled sections over two small rear ells; the roof was reclad with asphalt shingles in 2011.<sup>1</sup> There is a large brick interior chimney. The front facade has four bays, with two sets of paired windows to the right of the front entrance. A recessed right (east) side ell now has a set of 3 double hung windows, which replaced a three-part picture window on its front. Extending from this ell's right side is a sunporch/solarium addition (2002) with large single pane casement windows (with false muntins) above a short shingled kneewall on all three exposed sides.<sup>2</sup> It also has four solar collectors on its the south-facing portion of its gable roof. On the left (west) side the rear ell also extends beyond the left side wall. Single windows are on the upper story endwalls of the house indicating a finished attic. All windows are one-over-one sash having replaced six-over-nine sash, probably after the building was sold in 2009 (no permits for this work were found). A small shed-roofed wood frame shed, with board and batten siding, occupies the left side yard, slightly to the rear of the house. Driveway access is off Old State Highway to the rear of the dwelling and low stone walls run along the curved south side and northeast side property lines.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The lot on which 15 Ellis Road was built in 1950 was lot 15 of a twenty-seven-lot subdivision platted by Gilbert E. Ellis of Brewster in April 1925. Ellis was a farmer, realtor, and owner of a shore net and pound fishery and was born in Brewster in 1867; his father, Thaddeus, was a fisherman, and his mother, Caroline J. Norway, was born in Spain. Ellis began his career as a store clerk when he was fourteen, if not younger. At the time of his marriage in 1887 he worked as a salesman. The 1900 census shows Ellis as a fisherman; the 1910 census shows him more specifically as a weir fisherman. He was among a declining number of Cape fishermen in what was termed the "shore net and pound fishery," which used large nets attached to a wood framework extending from the shore outward to catch such inshore schooling fish as herring and menhaden; these were sold as bait to the offshore fishing industry, and other species caught in the nets were sold to urban fresh-fish markets after rail lines reached the Cape in the 1870s. In 1914 the town of Brewster granted Ellis a permit to build six fish pounds in its coastal waters, and by 1920 Ellis was one of three Brewster men who ran a pound fishery; he employed seven men, among the most of any of the 43 pound fisheries in the state, and caught \$3100 of fish.<sup>3</sup>

Once a prosperous industry on Cape Cod, the pound fishery began to decline after World War I, and by 1920 Ellis was probably preparing to leave the industry. The 1920 census shows him as a farmer, and by 1929 he is listed as a realtor. In September 1924 he bought four acres in South Eastham bordered mostly by the state highway, Town Cove, and what was, for a brief time, a canal that connected Town Cove to the river at Boat Meadow on Cape Cod Bay, a distance of less than a mile.<sup>4</sup> Ellis acquired the tract from New York City insurance broker Frederick Dorflinger Suydam, whose father, William Farrington Suydam, was an affluent Pennsylvania silk manufacturer and a summer resident of Orleans. The tract was part of the far larger holdings of Captain Heman Smith and his wife Louisiana Crosby Smith, who lived at 70 Old State Highway (EAS.43). In 1881, five years after the Smiths were lost at sea in the wreck of the bark *Burnside*, their children sold the property to their sibling Francis M. Smith (1852-1922), who in 1898 sold it to Somerville carpenter George S. Newcomb, an Orleans native. In 1913 Newcomb's son, George E. Newcomb, sold the four-acre tract to Albert F. Sherman, superintendent of the quarantine station on Gallup's Island in Boston Harbor, and in 1916 Sherman and his wife sold it to Frederick Suydam's mother, Mary Elizabeth Dorflinger Suydam.<sup>5</sup>

By January 1926 Ellis had built a house—what is now 76 Old State Highway—on the northernmost 1.5 acres of the tract, and in July 1930 he sold lot 26, facing Old State Highway, to Lewis W. Eldredge, who in 1937 acquired a second lot and parts of two others. It was on lot 15, which he acquired in the latter year, that the subject house was ultimately built.<sup>6</sup>

Born in March 1906 in Brewster, Lewis Winfred Eldredge was the son of Judah and Grace Gould Eldredge; his father was a garage mechanic, and by 1930 Lewis was a hardware salesman and living in his parents' Orleans household. He may have

<sup>1</sup> Town of Eastham building records.

<sup>2</sup> Town of Eastham Assessor's records list a date of April 24, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> On the pound fishery, see Matthew McKenzie, *Clearing the Coastline: The Nineteenth-Century Ecological & Cultural Transformation of Cape Cod* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2010), especially 11-12, 33, 91, 96, 138-39, 164, 172; *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners For the Year 1914* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1915), 100; and "Returns from the Shore Net and Pound Fisheries for the Year 1920," *Annual Report of the Division of Fisheries and Game for the Year Ending November 30, 1920* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1921), 151-58.

<sup>4</sup> Alice A. Lowe, comp., *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Eastham, MA: Eastham Historical Society, 1968), 35-36, states that the canal was dug in 1804 through "land following very nearly the boundary line between the towns of Eastham and Orleans" and became known as "Jeremiah's Gutter" where it crossed the property of Jeremiah Smith. A shallow channel, the canal filled quickly, and in 1817 the Eastham and Orleans Canal Proprietors built a wider one, but it was abandoned at some unstated later date.

<sup>5</sup> William H. Smith, Boston; Mary M. Smith and Nellie J. Smith, all formerly of Eastham, to Francis M. Smith, 1 November 1881, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (BCD) 148:366; Francis M. Smith, Somerville, to George S. Newcomb, 5 November 1898, BCD 296:12; George S. Newcomb to George E. Newcomb, 28 May 1909, BCD 296:105; George E. Newcomb to Albert F. Sherman, Boston, 6 January 1913, BCD 321:21; Albert F. and Emma L. Sherman to Mary E. Suydam, Montclair NJ, 15 August 1916, BCD 345:440; Frederick D. Suydam, NYC, to Gilbert E. Ellis, East Brewster, 4 September 1924, BCD 409:454.

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert E. Ellis to Lewis W. Eldredge, July 1930, BCD 476:87; Ellis to Eldredge, August 1937, BCD 529:279. Ellis also sold Eldredge a strip of land along lot 16 in February 1941; see BCD 575:473.

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acquired his first lot from Ellis in anticipation of his marriage, though a date of marriage has not been located. By 1931 Eldredge had built a house and garage at 30 Old State Highway, and by 1937 he owned the house and six acres. Tax records for 1947 identify his "homestead land" as lots 15, 16 and 27. The 1940 census shows him on Old King's Highway as a hardware salesman owning \$3000 in real property with his wife Gwendolyn Beryl Moody Eldredge, then thirty-five years old; the census indicates that they lived at the same address in 1935. Beryl Eldredge was born in Boston in 1904, the daughter of chef George B. Moody and Canada native Matilda Stimson. She was a teacher in Arlington in 1928 but by 1930 she had moved to Orleans, where she also taught.

In 1946 the Eldredges and Beryl Eldredge's mother, Matilda Moody, acquired the remaining parts of lots 16 and 17 in Ellis's subdivision from the estate of Albert L. Stratton, who had acquired them from Ellis in 1933 and 1936. Though the deed does not stipulate as much, a house—what is now 170 Ellis Street—had been built on this lot, probably about 1935. It seems likely the 170 Ellis Road was acquired as a summer or year-round residence for Eldredge's mother-in-law.<sup>7</sup> Tax records for 1954 show Eldredge owning three dwellings—one on his "homestead land" at 30 Old State Highway, one at 170 Ellis Road, and a "cottage" on lot 15, now 15 Ellis Road.

Lewis Eldredge died in June 1984, and his widow was living in one of the Ellis Road houses in 1985. She subdivided the property in December 1889.<sup>8</sup> Beryl Eldredge died in September 1990, and in August 1991 15 Ellis Road was sold to James E. Doherty III and Heidi Dedrick-Doherty of Cranston, Rhode Island. They owned the house until August 2009, at which time they sold it to current owners Matthew J. and Jamie M. Rivers of Orleans.

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## MAPS

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## SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES

<sup>7</sup> Richard N. Greenwood, Gardner, to Lewis W. and G. Beryl Eldredge and Matilda A. Moody, all Eastham, 5 July 1946, BCD 650:501.

<sup>8</sup> "Plan of Land in Eastham Mass Prepared for G. Beryl Eldredge," 20 December 1989, BCP 469:14.

<sup>9</sup> Doris T. Eldredge, executor will G. Beryl Eldredge, to James E. Doherty III and Heidi Dedrick-Doherty, Cranston RI, 12 August 1991, BCD 7655:086; James E. Doherty III and Heidi Dedrick-Doherty, Tombstone AZ, to Matthew J. and Jamie M. Rivers, Orleans, 14 August 2009, BCD 23964:124.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

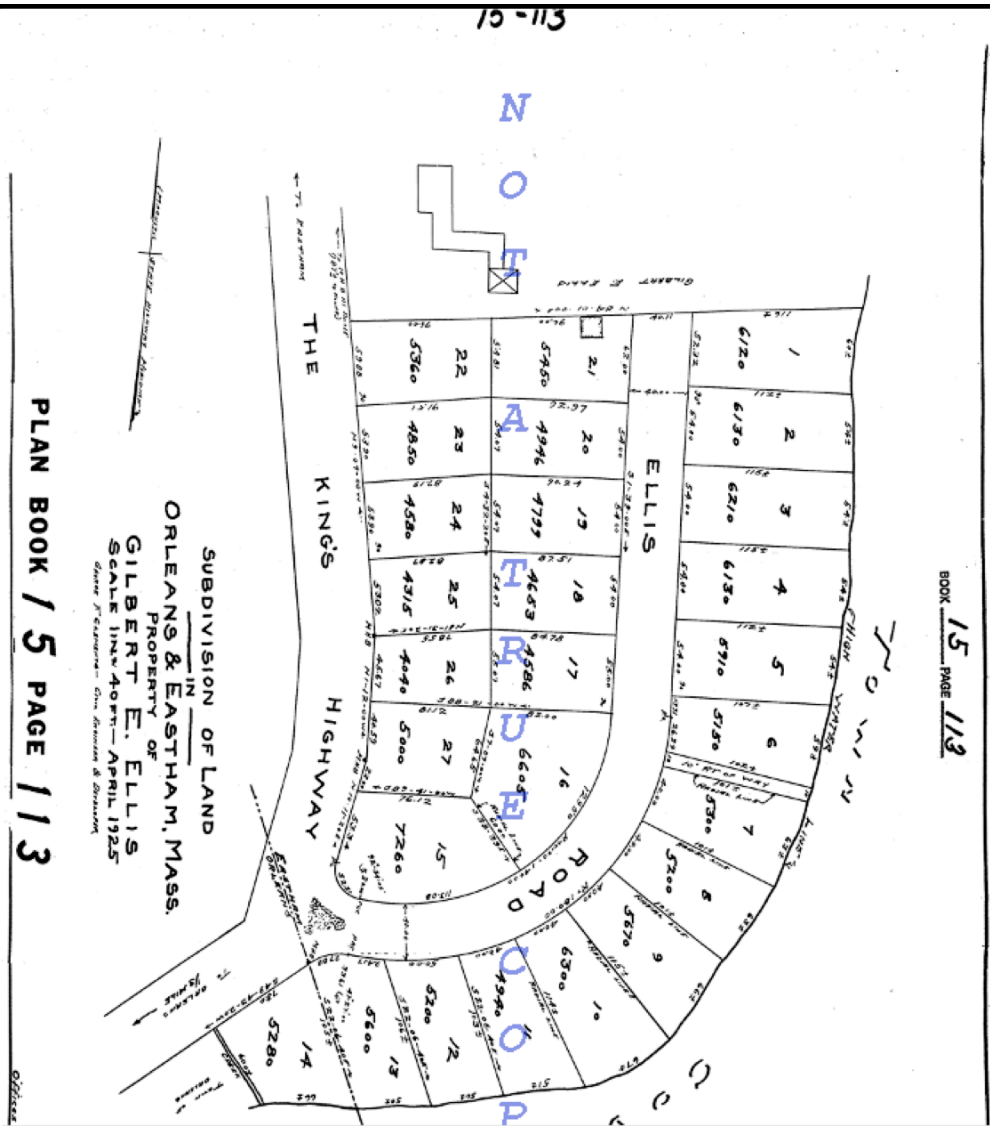
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Ellis subdivision plan of 1925 [BCP 15:13]: 15 Ellis Road is Lot 15.

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(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)

